

CITY OF SAN JOSÉ, CALIFORNIA
Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement
801 North First Street, Room 400
San José, California 95110-1795

Hearing Date/Agenda Number
CC 03-16-04 Item:

File Number
PDC03-107

Application Type
Conforming Planned Development Rezoning

Council District
7

Planning Area
South San Jose

Assessor's Parcel Number(s)
455-59-001, 002, 003, 010, 011; 455-63-004, 006

STAFF REPORT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Completed by: Darren McBain

Location: North side of Hillsdale Avenue, opposite the northerly terminus of Vistapark Drive

Gross Acreage: 7.3

Net Acreage: 7.3

Net Density: 29.2 units per acre

Existing Zoning: A(PD) Planned Development

Existing Use: Approved zoning for up to 765 single-family attached units (partly completed and/or partly under construction)

Proposed Zoning: A(PD) Planned Development

Proposed Use: Revision to four previously approved residential blocks, within larger zoning, to allow a mix of 212 detached and attached residential units

GENERAL PLAN

Completed by: DM

Communications Hill Planned Community

Project Conformance:
☒ Yes ☐ No
☒ See Analysis and Recommendations

SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING

Completed by: DM

North: Undeveloped hillside

County of Santa Clara

East: AT&T communication tower, quarry, undeveloped hillside

County of Santa Clara

South: Single-family attached residences

A(PD) Planned Development

West: Single-family attached residences, mobile homes

A(PD) Planned Development

ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

Completed by: DM

☒ Environmental Impact Report
☐ Negative Declaration

☐ Exempt
☐ Environmental Review Incomplete

FILE HISTORY

Completed by: DM

Annexation Title: Edenvale No. 19

Date: 6/24/1993

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION

☒ Approval
☐ Approval with Conditions
☐ Denial

Date: _____

Approved by: _____
☐ Action
☒ Recommendation

OWNER/DEVELOPER

KB Home South Bay, Inc.
6700 Koll Center Parkway #200
Pleasanton, CA 94566

PUBLIC AGENCY COMMENTS RECEIVED

Completed by: DM

Department of Public Works

See attached memorandum.

Other Departments and Agencies

See attached staff report for GP03-07-11 and GPT03-07-11

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

None received

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BACKGROUND

The applicant, KB Home South Bay, is proposing a conforming Planned Development Rezoning of the subject property from A(PD) Planned Development to A(PD) Planned Development, to reconfigure four previously approved residential blocks (212 previously approved units) to allow a mix of detached and attached unit types. The site is located within the Communications Hill Planned Community (CHPC) area, which was established with the adoption of the Communications Hill Specific Plan in 1992. This site is a portion of a larger 27-acre site that was approved in 2001 for 765 single-family attached residential units (KB Home's Tuscany Hills project, Planned Development Zoning file no. PDC99-083). A new Planned Development Zoning is necessary for this portion of the overall site because the proposed unit-type mix includes detached housing units, whereas the original zoning only allowed attached units.

The overall KB Home site is located at the top of Communications Hill. Some of the units approved under the previous Planned Development Zoning have been built and occupied, while others are still under construction. The portion of the site that is under consideration for the current rezoning is currently undeveloped. Surrounding land uses include the County Communications Center, the Mill Pond mobile home park, and undeveloped land to the north. The existing AT&T Communications tower, undeveloped land, and a former quarry are located to the east. Across Hillsdale Avenue, to the south, are existing single-family attached and detached residential dwelling units. Located to the west are single-family attached dwelling units (Helzer Ranch project), and the Mountain Springs mobile home park.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project includes 212 residential units, including 126 "detached garden townhouses" and 86 condominium units in a 4-story podium building. The units are configured within a grid of public streets in accordance with the urban design vision for the Communications Hill Specific Plan. The layout of the network of public streets within the boundaries of this rezoning was determined under a previous Planned Development Permit, File No. PD02-071, and will remain unchanged under this proposal. The project area also includes a future public park, the details of which were previously approved under Planned Development Permit File No. PD03-022, and which will also remain unaffected by the current proposal. This park, shown as Block 5 on the plans, is being included in the proposed rezoning so that the residential blocks of the subject rezoning form one contiguous area. A public stairway area, which takes the place of a street for one block and will function as a public space, is also part of the project area.

GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE

The project site is designated Communications Hill Planned Community (CHPC) on the San Jose 2020 General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram. The CHPC designation includes a requirement for a minimum density of 24 dwelling units per acre within each residential block. The proposed rezoning includes three residential blocks, Blocks 1, 3, and 4, with lower densities, at approximately 17 units per acre, than what the CHPC designation currently requires. However, the inclusion of a podium apartment building in the proposed rezoning brings the new proposal's overall density to 29 units per acre, which is slightly higher than the previous 765-unit project's overall density of about 28 units per acre.

General Plan Amendments GP03-07-11 and GPT03-07-11 are proposed to allow density reductions on Blocks 1, 3, and 4. Said General Plan Amendments were recommended for approval by the Planning Commission at their February 9, 2004 meeting, and are scheduled to be heard concurrently by the City Council with this rezoning. The proposed General Plan Amendments would allow for densities lower than the current minimum on those three blocks, down to 17 dwelling units per acre (DU/AC). However, the overall density within the Planned Development Zoning project area would be required to continue to meet the 24-40 DU/AC range. This would ensure that the desired housing types developed in the larger project area remain consistent with the vision of the Communications Hill Specific Plan. If the General Plan Amendments noted above are approved by the City Council, then the proposed rezoning can be considered to be in conformance with the site's General Plan designation of Communications Hill Planned Community.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The environmental impacts and potential impacts of the original 765-unit project were addressed by a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (EIR) entitled "Communications Hill, Kaufman & Broad Residential Project," which was certified by the City Council on March 20, 2001. The proposed rezoning is on a portion of the overall site that was contemplated under that EIR. The current rezoning proposal includes up to 212 units located where the preliminary site plan for the previous project showed 205 units. A PD Permit for a commensurate reduction in unit count on the remaining KB project site will be required in order to maximize the potential build out on the subject site to ensure that no more than 765 units are constructed as described in the EIR.

The total number of units that will actually be built is currently estimated to be 734, based on site-layout changes that took place under previous approvals as the project evolved between 2001 and the present time.

ANALYSIS

The Communications Hill Specific Plan (CHSP) envisions a dense, highly urban, vibrant, and diverse hillside community. The proposed rezoning includes a housing unit type (detached housing) and a density reduction on three future City blocks that were previously approved for a higher number of attached townhouses with a more urban character. Those proposed changes, *per se*, arguably do not promote the vision outlined in the specific plan. However, the proposed project also includes a podium condominium building in lieu of previously approved townhouses in Block 7 as well as many other locations in the overall project area. In addition to creating a slight (seven-unit) increase in the project's overall density, the podium building will substantially contribute to the diversity of housing types within the overall KB Home project and will be the most urban building component proposed within the CHSP area to date.

Podium Structure Concept and Design

The proposed podium building has a somewhat more contemporary architectural character than the previously approved townhouses as well as more height and massing. Therefore, in addition to unit-type variation, the podium building would materially add to the project's level of architectural variation and visual interest, a change that is supported by Planning staff. The podium building, consistent with the General Plan Amendments, will also set a good precedent for development of future residential projects on Communications Hill. As noted in the General Plan Amendment staff reports, this project is being conditioned to require the podium building to be constructed before, or simultaneous with, the detached units proposed on the other three residential blocks of the project.

Detached Unit Concept and Design

The detached units proposed on Blocks 1, 3, and 4 are a unit type commonly referred to as a "detached garden townhouse". These units have a small side yard on either side but are otherwise similar in size, scale, and architectural character to a more typical attached townhouse unit. Because of the separation between the units, they have a lower overall density than attached townhouses; 17 DU/AC, than an average of just over 24 DU/AC on other blocks of attached units in the KB project. The proposed units will continue to have a mix of two and three stories of living space over a garage level, and will be separated by the minimum clearance necessary for emergency access of three feet per side per unit, or six feet total between two units. The proposed units orient to the public street and spaces including patios and balconies on the front and garage entrances internalized on the backs of the units along private drives. The units and the layout of the blocks, will in staff's opinion, be adequately urban in form and character so that they will blend with the rest of the project and will not inordinately deter from the objectives of the specific plan. The introduction of detached units will also increase the range of housing types and architectural variation within the project.

Setbacks/Street Interface

Both unit types are minimally set back from the street, in accordance with the urban character promoted by the specific plan. Blocks 1, 3, and 4 have been laid out in such a way that the units have a maximum amount of street presence by buildings. Internal private driveways will be minimally visible from outside the blocks. The blocks adjacent to the Block 5 public park and the Block 4 public stairs have units fronting on these public spaces with out disruption by private drives. The podium building has numerous stoops to enhance its street-level appearance and its close functional relationship to the street. The building has been designed so that the semi-underground parking level will have a minimum above-ground height and will be substantially screened from the exterior. Both of the proposed unit types have private open space, common open space, and parking that exceeds the requirements of the Residential Design Guidelines.

Architecture

As is typical for a Planned Development Zoning, the architecture and site design details that are shown are considered "conceptual" and will undergo further review by Planning staff at the subsequent Planned Development Permit stage. At that time, staff will work with the applicant to refine and optimize the final configuration of design elements such as, final landscape treatment for the stairway park area, widths and layout of internal walkways and paseos, amount of common/open landscaping in front of the detached units, height relationships between private patios and the nearby sidewalk, and other similar aspects of the project.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

A notice of the public hearing for this project was distributed to the owners and tenants of all properties located within 500 feet of the project site, and was published in a newspaper in accordance with the Public Outreach Policy. In addition, this staff report was posted on the Planning Department's web site.

CONCLUSION

The proposed changes to the KB Home Tuscany Hills project will bring an element of truly high-density housing to the project. The introduction of detached townhouse units into the project will increase the variety of housing types and architectural diversity within the project and will not substantially deter from the Communications Hill Specific Plan's objective of creating a diverse, urban community.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends that the City Council approve the subject Planned Development Rezoning for the following reasons:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the San José 2020 General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation of Communications Hill Planned Community, as amended by File Nos. GP03-07-11 and GPT03-07-11.
2. The proposed project conforms to the appropriate policies and/or intent of the Residential Design Guidelines.
3. The proposed project furthers the objectives of the City's infill housing strategies.
4. The proposed project conforms to the requirements of CEQA.